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ABSTRACT

The primary goal of work force development--meaningful job placement--may appear to be narrower than the broad social and personal goals of education; however, education and work force development share common functions, content, and objectives. The training process in work force development involves many of the major functions of a formal education process: teaching, curriculum development, assessment, and counseling. The content of work force training is becoming increasingly educational as work force development responds to higher levels of literacy required by the economy. Given the common functions and content of education and work force development, it is not surprising that work force developers and educators also share objectives, such as instructing effectively and reaching populations outside the traditional K-12 and higher education system. In view of their common functions, objectives, and shared fundamental educational commitment to helping individuals reach their full potential, educators and work force developers are natural constituencies for each other. Their common functions and concerns give work force developers and educators a means of talking to one another about how job training and school-based learning reinforce and supplement each other. (MN)

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Making Connections:

The Link between Training and Education

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Viewpoint

MAKING CONNECTIONS: THE LINK BETWEEN TRAINING AND EDUCATION

by D. Malcolm Leith, AIM Training Programs

"Being an Advocate for Workforce Development" in the October 1995 issue of *NAWDP Advantage* points out the advocate's need to adapt the message to the audience. It asks, for example, "Are you talking to educators? Talk about the link between education and training."

Workforce development's primary goal — that is, meaningful job placement — may appear to be narrower than the broad social and personal goals on education, such as development of citizenship skills. However, the workforce training **process** reflects functions, content, and objectives of education. This process provides a basis for talking to educators. Further, as the educational dimension of this process becomes more apparent, it can be seen that job placement embraces broad outcomes of education, such as the development of thinking skills. Thus, both specifically — in functions, content, and objectives — and in its broader outcomes, workforce development is educational.

Functions

The training process in workforce development involves many of the major functions of a formal education process: teaching, curriculum development, assessment, counseling. A review of the workforce development functions outlined in the *NAWDP "Learning Objectives"* shows that these functions contain many components with which educators would identify. These shared workforce development/educational functions are found not only under the heading of training/instruction, but, in varying degrees, in most of the other functional areas as well: contract management, counseling/case management, marketing/job development, MIS, supervision/management, program planning/developing. Vocabulary

in these categories that is specifically educational includes: teaching, instruction, learning, assessment and testing, counseling, curricula, course content, learners, self-direction, skills, knowledge, instructional method and materials incorporation of learners' life experience, learning styles, lifelong learning. Thus workforce developers and educators have a common framework and vocabulary for communication. Further, several of the workforce development functions, such as the fostering of lifelong learning, indicate the broader educational goals inherent in meaningful job placement.

Content

The content of workforce training is becoming increasingly educational as workforce development responds to higher levels of literacy required by the economy. This response is evidenced, for example, by publications of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) - U.S. Department of Labor. The SCANS documents identify broad basic skills (academic, personal, and thinking) and general competencies (e.g., understanding social, organizational, and technical systems) as essential educational components of workforce development. Additionally, the SCANS documents recommend that a number of topics traditionally found in the general curriculum of schools be integrated into training: English/writing, mathematics, science, social studies/geography, history. Thus workforce developers have a basis for talking knowledgeably to educators about subject matters, and for benefiting from educators' long experience with these instructional areas.

Some educators, in turn, may view the increasingly educational content of

workforce development as a benefit to all education: that is, as an important curriculum and instructional model for all education. Such educators (for example, W. Norton Grubb, et al., in *Education through the Study of Occupations*, 1995) regard the integrating of general curriculum into job training as realizing a long-standing educational ideal. This ideal, first articulated early in the twentieth century by educator and philosopher John Dewey, is the organizing of all education around the study of occupations. This ideal is not widely implemented. But it provides another point of contact between workforce developers and educators; it shows the respect educators can have for job training; and it offers added evidence of the educational dimension of workforce development.

Objectives

Given common functions and content, it is not surprising that workforce developers and educators share objectives: for example, effective instruction and reaching populations outside the traditional K-12 and higher education system.

Attaining effective instruction includes, for educators, designing instruction so as to recognize and respond to the social context of curriculum activities. It also involves individualizing the education process. Educators call socially responsive learning "contextual learning"; workforce developers sometimes call this learning "functional context learning." Workplace literacy programs demonstrate functional context learning, or to use the educators' terminology, contextual learning. Individualizing the education process takes the form, for educators, of guidance counseling, student self-pacing, and multimedia curricula, for example. Workforce development also employs these individualizing activities, and in some cases expands them. Individual Service Strategies, for example, include long-range education and employment planning. Open entry/open exit can allow participants to enroll and graduate throughout a program's duration, rather than on a few set dates. Thus educators and workforce developers can compare experiences in contextual learning and in individualizing instruction.

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CONNECTIONS

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The objective of serving those outside the traditional system involves, for educators, reaching nonschool populations through public school-based and college- and university-based adult and continuing education programs. Workforce developers also reach nonschool populations, through programs which work with target groups defined in legislation: e.g., the disadvantaged, unemployed adult and the dislocated worker. Often such targeted groups are not specifically served by adult and continuing education programs. Thus workforce developers can be seen as complementing education's nonschool outreach. Further, the expertise developers have gained in serving their target populations can provide possible insight for educators into serving nonschool populations.

Discussing workforce development in terms of shared objectives such as these can help educators see something of their own work and goals in workforce development. It can also help educators and workforce developers appreciate their opportunities to learn from each other.

Conclusion

Educators and workforce developers are natural constituencies for each other. They have common functions, content, and objectives, and share the fundamental educational commitment to helping individuals reach their full potential. These provide workforce developers with the means of talking to educators about how job training and school-based learning reinforce and supplement each other, as each helps individuals become more skilled, productive, and self-sufficient members of society.

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